

In an agriculturally rich and growing area like Northern California, reliable access to high quality water is critically important. Northern California's earliest settlers laid claim to the legal right to beneficially use water for farms, homes, and businesses. They also invested heavily in water infrastructure - levees, ditches, pumps, canals, and other facilities - to help meet the needs of Northern California communities. These early actions laid the foundation for the strong economy and rural way of life Northern Californians enjoy today, and should, in my view, be preserved at all costs.

California's water supply must be managed in a way that ensures the needs of our region - where most of California's water originates - are met first, before we look to address the water supply needs of other areas of the state. I strongly opposed previous Delta conveyance proposals, such as the original "peripheral canal" and the so-called "isolated facility" developed through the CALFED process, because Northern California's interests were not being properly protected. In improving California's water situation, all regions of the state must "get well together," and Northern California's water needs and water rights must be fully respected and protected first before excess resources are permitted to flow south. I would vigorously oppose anything that does not meet this important test.

A critical aspect of this issue is the need for additional water storage in the state. The State Water Project was completed at a time when California's economy was significantly smaller with roughly half of today's population. While water conservation and water use efficiency must continue to be pursued, new surface storage is equally, if not more, important and would bring additional benefits such as hydropower, recreational opportunities, and critically needed flood control.

Strategically-placed water storage facilities would hold back peak winter flows and allow our levee system on the valley floor to function as designed and provide the first layer of defense against high water. Northern California has a long infamous history of widespread flooding. We must be vigilant in our efforts to prevent the next major flood. This includes not only investing public resources in upstream reservoirs and levee maintenance and construction, but also commonsense reforms to our environmental laws to ensure that flood protection efforts are able to proceed in a timely manner.

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